

Message Text

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65-62

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-07 SAM-01 SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3451

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EEWT, PO, PL, UR

SUBJ: PROSPECTIVE SHIP CONSTRUCTION DEALS WITH EAST BLOC

1. SOVIET ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL MISSION HEADED BY A MR. GANIN, VICE PRESIDENT OF SOVIET FIRM SUDOIPORT, ARRIVED IN LISBON JULY 15 FOR ONE-WEEK VISIT. DELEGATION INCLUDES SPECIALISTS IN CONSTRUCTION OF FISHING VESSELS AND FOREIGN TRADE OFFICIALS. PRESS REPORTED THAT MISSION WILL STUDY POSSIBILITY OF PLACING PURCHASE ORDER WITH SETENAVE SHIPYARD FOR LARGE VESSELS. DELEGATION IS ALSO SCHEDULED TO VISIT LISNAVE SHIPYARD, AS WELL AS YARDS IN OPORTO AND VIANA DO CASTELO.

2. IN MID-JUNE GOP ANNOUNCED TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH POLISH GOVERNMENT FOR "POSSIBLE" CONSTRUCTION OF 71 SHIPS. INCLUDED
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WOULD BE NINE GRAIN VESSELS OF 33,000 TONS EACH, FOUR 16,000

TON CONTAINER SHIPS, AND THREE SHELLS FOR 16-17,000 TON "SEMI-CONTAINER" VESSELS. FIVE 500-TON TRAWLERS AND 50 FISHING VESSELS OF UP TO 33 FEET WOULD MAKE UP REST OF ORDER. A MEETING IS SUPPOSED TO BE HELD THIS MONTH IN LISBON TO WORK OUT DETAILS.

3. RUSSIAN AND POLISH EMBASSY OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US PRIVATELY THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS HAVE SIGNED NO FIRM CONTRACTS TO PURCHASE SHIPS FROM PORTUGAL. POLISH AGREEMENT REPORTEDLY WAS VERY GENERAL STATEMENT OF INTENTION, LEAVING NUMEROUS DETAILS TO BE RESOLVED. ANY LARGE VESSELS PURCHASED IN PORTUGAL, HOWEVER, WOULD BE TOWED TO POLAND FOR OUTFITTING. SIMILARLY, RUSSIANS STATE THEY HAVE RECENTLY EXPANDED THEIR PURCHASES ONLY BY TAKING SMALL ADDITIONAL QUANTITIES OF SHOES AND WINE. PORTUGUESE ALLEGEDLY ARE PRESSING THEM TO PURCHASE LARGE SHIPS AND CRANES, BUT RUSSIANS SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT PORTUGUESE INDUSTRY CAN LIVE UP TO GOP CLAIMS. OFFICIALS OF BOTH EMBASSIES EXPRESSED SKEPTICISM THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE CONCLUDE MAJOR CONTRACTS.

4. COMMENT: A. THESE PROSPECTIVE AGREEMENTS ARE PART OF PATTERN OF SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR PORTUGAL, AND INTEREST IN INCREASING COMMERCIAL AND OTHER TIES. PORTUGUESE HAVE ALSO CLAIMED THERE ARE GOOD PROSPECTS FOR CONTRACTS FROM EAST GERMANY, WITH LESSER HOPES FOR ROMANIA. DESPITE OBVIOUS PORTUGUESE DESIRE FOR CONCESSIONARY ARRANGEMENTS, EAST EUROPEANS INSIST THEY ARE OFFERING ONLY STRICTLY COMMERCIAL TERMS AND HAVE NO INTENTION OF PROVIDING EXTENSIVE CREDITS. NEVERTHELESS THEY MANAGE TO GET WIDE AND FAVORABLE PLAY IN LOCAL PRESS.

B. GOP IS MAKING INCREASING ATTEMPTS TO FIND BUSINESS FOR TROUBLED SHIP REPAIR/CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, WHICH UNTIL LAST YEAR WAS AMONG MOST TECHNICALLY ADVANCED, DYNAMIC, AND GROWING INDUSTRIES IN COUNTRY.

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